

CMS Connection

February 2020

Director's Monthly Message: Janel L. Forde



With the arrival of February, we are reminded of the romance of Valentine's Day, the coming excitement of Mardi Gras and the Lenten season, and the additional day for Leap Year. My thoughts turn also to our consideration of February as Black History Month and what this remembrance

means to those of us dedicated to public service.

As I consider our nation's history, I am constantly reminded of the spirit, vision, and energy of Thurgood Marshall, named as the 96th Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1967, and the first black person to be appointed to the nation's highest court, serving admirably until retiring in 1991 at age 82.

Justice Marshall's words and insights continue to reverberate in our consciousness and serve us well today, especially as we consider our roles and responsibilities as public servants. "None of us got where we are solely by pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps," Justice Marshall once noted, in recognizing that the call for assistance is not relegated to race, gender, social class, or any other personal attribute.

A great voice for personal dignity and inherent rights, Justice Marshall often asked the kinds of questions that make us stop and consider the underlying reasons that we do what we do. He famously challenged us to consider: "What is the quality of your intent? ... What each of us must come to realize is that our intent always comes through."

And he told us an enduring truth even as he provided words of gentle caution: "The measure of a country's greatness is its ability to retain compassion in times of crisis."

These are largely unrelated statements uttered or written over his nearly quarter-century of service on the Supreme Court, and these profound statements, reflecting Justice Marshall's relentless spirit of advocacy, are perhaps more relevant today than ever before. His ideals serve to challenge each of our notions of adequate service goals. And, it is up to each of us to consider how these high ideals affect us in our work with CMS and for the State of Illinois.

For me, the spirit within these words lifts us like a life preserver, enabling us to clearly see and understand our obligations as public servants. We are to extend every effort that we can in our working lives, within our statutory mandates, to ensure that our purpose as written in the law is served on behalf of all the citizens of Illinois.

At CMS, this collective purpose encompasses our various and differing roles in overseeing such needs as proper human resource management across all State agencies, proper procurement management, proper facilities management, proper administrative support to agencies and individuals, proper vehicle fleet management, proper management of benefits and health care services for all State workers and retirees, proper human rights advocacy through fair and equitable administrative hearings, and proper training and ongoing operational management to ensure that we eliminate waste and add value in all our efforts. All these things reside within our proud mandate at CMS. And all these things deserve equal and appropriate attention by our professional staff.



Our collective role at CMS in each of these seemingly unrelated areas could not be more critical to the ongoing good of the State and, in turn, its role in effectively ensuring that all of the 80-plus executive agencies, boards, and commissions, including CMS, are properly staffed and equipped to do their level best in providing direct services to citizens throughout Illinois. Make no mistake, CMS has a crucial part to play in each of these areas, affecting each of these important State entities.

This sense of our role and of the importance of our work has remained foremost in my thoughts throughout this first year as the appointed director and steward of CMS services, as we pass our first anniversary in leading CMS forward and as we prepare to make the most of the year ahead.

In considering the importance of black history, indeed, all of U.S. history, each of us in CMS has a responsibility to understand and embrace Justice Marshall's underlying message, and to live through the spirit of his words every day. We are here to serve all equitably, fairly, and with gladness of heart for the opportunity to serve and to make our great State even better.

And as we consider the importance each of us embodies as we weigh our responses to our clients' needs and as we strive to accomplish our service goals, often within stressful working environs, we would do well to consider another of the Justice's most famous thoughts, when he said, "In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute."

I think that no truer words have been spoken. May we all embrace this ideal, as we go and do our best work.

EOTM Award for February 2020 – James Kolaz

By his own reckoning, **James Kolaz** is a multi-tasker as he pursues his work for the **CMS Bureau of Property Management**. And no matter how complicated his service function may be, he says his success is tied to customer outcomes – nothing more and nothing less.

Kolaz's dedication to an old-school style of face-to-face customer service, and his willingness to handle as many as three complicated customer-service positions simultaneously during recent years, have culminated in his recognition as CMS Employee of the Month for February 2020.

Kolaz has served as a CMS Leasing Representative since 2008, covering most of Southern Illinois from his office in East St. Louis. From July 2013 until December 2019, he served as the de facto Facility Manager for downstate Illinois until that long-vacant position was filled. Add in a one-year stint in 2013 helping on **Business Enterprise Program (BEP) vendor certification** reviews and assisting an understaffed BEP program with a lot on its downstate plate. Kolaz had previously served CMS from 2004 through 2008 as a knowledge management researcher under BEP.

"Customer service is clearly what we are here to provide, and James has stepped up in a lot of ways for CMS in 2019 and over the years in general," said **Mike Pittman**, CMS Deputy Director of the Bureau of Property Management, as he announced the award.



Our Employee of the Month, James Kolaz (Center) stands with James Fox (Left) and Tim Franke (Right).

"We know James has been a huge asset to our Property Management efforts based in Metro-East St. Louis and covering the entire southern region of the State. The trust he has built has really helped us keep our office-space providers engaged despite the challenges created" through recent years of policy conflict and budget impasse, Pittman added.

Kolaz loves the work but doesn't deny he was ready to focus on a single position whenever it would become possible. "At one point a few years ago, within those various positions, I was driving about 3,000 miles a month covering about three-quarters of the State for different purposes" from leasing and facility services to

vendor certification interviews, Kolaz said. “I loved doing it and getting to meet and work with a lot of different people, but it wasn’t easy doing that much travel.”

Kolaz says the challenges he has encountered prompt him to step up his game as he reaches out to the more than 80 leasing vendors and properties he serves. “I just try to be a team player and recognize that these vendors providing office space for State agencies – a lot of them have been through a lot of non-payment during the budget crises,” Kolaz said. “CMS Leasing has an important role because a lot of these vendors, under the State procurement rules, haven’t been paid in accordance with their contracts, and they have to go through claims court in many cases just to receive the back payments owed to them. Obviously, we need to do all we can to keep them happy where they are because the space they provide is valuable to the State.”

CMS Facility Manager James Fox of Springfield nominated Kolaz for the Employee of the Month award, noting his excellent time management and customer service skills. “James does a great job of splitting his time up between seeking and securing space for our customers and improving the customer experience with the oversight of facilities he oversees,” Fox said. “I recently traveled with him throughout his area, where we **visited over 20 facilities within two days**. It was very inspiring to find that, at each stop, his internal customers were very happy to see him. He is always very accommodating and quick to address issues brought to his attention.”

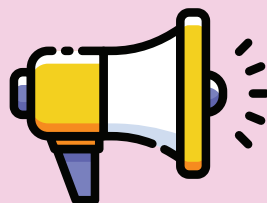
Kolaz’s immediate supervisor, **Tim Franke, Division Manager** for Transactions and Property Administration, points to Kolaz’s professionalism and strong work ethic as a guiding force. “James has a strong work ethic and attention to detail combined with his positive attitude,” Franke said. “His positive interaction with internal and external customers is second to none and a role model for others to follow.”

Kolaz says he employs an old-school approach. “It’s all about honesty – these folks have a lot of legitimate issues and complaints. You know what you’re likely to hear, and you pretty much have to walk in trying to figure out how you’re going to be able to help,” Kolaz said. “Our vendor relations are way down in most places and we’re trying to win people back. I just treat them with honesty and respect, and whatever their issues are, I try to get answers to questions, figure out solutions to problems, and then follow up as quickly as possible and get them taken care of.”

The approach is working. **“People need to feel respected and know that what they’re doing is important and appreciated,” Kolaz said.** “I’m just concentrating on winning the trust of all our customers. That goes a long way towards working together with them for the long term, and the goodwill we create serves our tenant agencies well at the same time.”

For now, however, Kolaz is happy just to once again be able to focus on a single job – as Leasing Representative for CMS. “The timing is good because Leasing has a lot going on right now just trying to stay up to speed on contracts and renewals – not letting things go to holdover status if we can possibly get them renewed and in place for the longer term” with as little agency disruption as possible, Kolaz said. “That’s the challenge, but it’s still about personal contact, honest communications, and regular follow-up.”

Kolaz looks forward to a long career with CMS and the State of Illinois. **“I love being here, and I really like making an impact in my work,” Kolaz says.** His regular customers will tell you they expect and receive nothing less from James.



If you are interested in nominating a person or team for Employee of the Month, please go **bit.ly/CMS-EOTM** to make a submission.



Better Know the Bureaus – Legal Services

All across Illinois, our CMS colleagues do amazing work. Get a behind the scenes look at accomplishments of Legal Services.

Did You Know

Legal Services provides legal support to all of CMS and the state executive agencies under the control of the Governor. It is CMS Legal Services' mission to provide proactive, timely, practical and innovative legal solutions and legal counsel that meets or exceeds the expectations of CMS and other state agencies who are our clients. CMS Legal Services achieves this by tailoring their support to the specific needs of each area of CMS, which, in turn, provides support to other state agencies. To accomplish this, CMS Legal Services is grouped into six general areas of support, or groupings: **Finance and Administration, Benefits, Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and Procurement, Labor Relations, Personnel, and Property Management.**

Each group within CMS Legal Services provides specific services for their area of responsibility. For instance, the **Finance and Administration** group provides legal support to the Office of Finance and Management, the Bureau of Agency Services, Bureau of Operational Excellence (Rapid Results), the Illinois Office of Communication and Information, the Bureau of Administrative Hearings, and the Bureau of Internal Audit.

Detailed examples of Finance and Administration's legal services can be shown through two critical areas of support: ethics and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Ethics, as provided through the CMS Ethics Officer, is responsible for all agency trainings, working with the Inspector General regarding any complaints or investigations, conducting internal CMS investigations, reviewing Statements of Economic Interest, submitting revolving door determinations, reviewing requests for outside employment, reviewing gift ban waiver requests, and advising on general ethics questions. The CMS FOIA Officer is responsible for receiving and responding to FOIA requests, responding to and defending the agency before the Attorney General's Public Access Counselor when a FOIA response is challenged, and assisting the Attorney General with any FOIA litigation.

The **Benefits** group provides legal advice and support to the Bureau of Benefits and other State agencies and universities regarding the administration of multiple programs impacting State employees and retirees. Benefits

Legal assists the programs by ensuring the programs' general compliance with state and federal statutes and regulations, as well as providing legal guidance on specific inquiries or issues facing the programs, such as member eligibility or claim appeals.

Benefits Legal also reviews all legislation which may impact any of the programs and proposes and drafts legislative amendments designed to improve the programs. Benefits Legal assists in the procurement, drafting, and negotiating of contracts with all program vendors, and works with the Bureau of Benefits to ensure that all vendors adhere to the contract terms.



It is CMS Legal Services' mission to provide proactive, timely, practical and innovative legal solutions.

The duties of the **BEP and Procurement** group encompass two similar areas of CMS responsibility. Procurement, as administered through the Bureau of Strategic Sourcing (BOSS), is home to the State of Illinois's centralized procurement function. BOSS conducts procurements for wide variety of supplies and services on behalf of multiple State Agencies, as well as qualified not-for-profit entities. The BEP and Procurement group serves as BOSS's primary legal counsel and provides procurement-legal services to other State Agencies within the Executive Branch. The group also provides proactive, timely, practical, and innovative legal solutions and legal counsel to ensure that purchases are made in compliance with all applicable laws, rules, and other requirements.

An integral relationship between **BOSS and BEP** has been intentionally created and as a result both are housed under one Legal division at CMS. Support and growth of the BEP program is a principal focus of the Governor's Administration, and this is best coordinated through the seamless integration of BOSS and BEP. A close alignment between these two bureaus will ensure a cohesive and timely procurement process that prioritizes supplier diversity.

The CMS Office of **Labor Relations** is comprised of two sections, Labor Relations and Legal Labor Relations, that work together to provide CMS and the agencies, boards, and commission under the jurisdiction of the Governor with comprehensive collective bargaining representation. At the head of Labor Relations is a CMS Deputy Director, who supervises a subordinate staff

comprised of Labor Administrators. At the head of Legal Labor Relations is a Deputy General Counsel, who supervises a subordinate staff comprised of Labor Counsel.

The main role of the Labor Counsel is to represent agencies, boards, and commissions in contractual grievance arbitrations and in front of the Illinois Public Labor Relations Board (ILRB). Contractual grievance arbitrations usually deal with either local (employee or facility specific) issues or agency and state issues.

The **Personnel** group supports CMS and all other State agencies in a variety of ways. First, Personnel provides CMS and the State agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction legal advice and assistance on technical and complex employment related topics such as the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act as well as the Personnel Code, the Personnel Rules and the Pay Plan. Personnel represents CMS and other State agencies in discrimination complaints from the Department of Human Rights, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and other similar Federal and State entities.

Personnel also reviews and advises on FOIA requests received by CMS and internal policies, conducts legislative reviews of bills impacting State employment, and coordinates with the Office of the Attorney General on employment related litigation involving State employees. Finally, Personnel offers legal training to all State agencies on all employment related topics.

The **Property Management** group provides legal support to the CMS Bureau of Property Management (BOPM) and other state agencies and departments with their real estate questions and needs. Leases are reviewed and revised for office space and other land needed for state agencies to perform their day to day operations and programs. Property Management also assists in negotiating and drafting Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) for real estate usage between agencies or local units of government.

Property Management legal is a resource for any agency in their purchase, sale, or surplus declaration of real estate. They assist in the real property sales process from start to finish, drafting documents from the sales contract through the recordable deed to ensure a smooth transaction for the client agency.

Research, advising, and drafting assistance for legislation are additional services Property Management legal provides to State legislators. Whether it is a specialized bill for the transfer of a parcel, or a complete revision of

an existing statute pertaining to real estate, Property Management legal is on call to assist our elected officials.

CMS Legal Services provides vital internal legal support to all of CMS and the state executive agencies under the control of the Governor. Whether it is managing mandatory trainings, representing the state in front of the ILRB, providing assistance in real estate and leasing transactions, or offering legal advice on a number of issues affecting CMS and the state, each area of CMS Legal Services strives to achieve their goal of delivering timely, practical and innovative solutions by tailoring their support to the specific needs of each area of CMS, thereby, providing internal support to other state agencies serving the people of the State of Illinois.

By the Numbers

In addition to interpreting existing law and providing legal guidance to all CMS bureaus, CMS Legal Services provides legislation review and analysis (i.e. support, opposition, comments, alternative proposals). For 2019, CMS Legal Services reviewed 481 legislative bills, amendments, resolutions, and proposals.

The breakdown of legislative analysis, by number of reviews, provided by each CMS Legal Services unit, is as follows:

- Benefits: 100
- Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and Procurement: 147
 - BEP: 74
 - Procurement: 73
- Finance and Administration: 54
- Labor Relations: 29
- Personnel: 98
- Property Management: 53

After legislative bill, amendment, resolution, or proposal analysis is complete, CMS Legal Services suggests a CMS position and recommendation for the legislation.

An example of CMS Legal Services legislative analysis and advocacy involved Senate Bill 177. This bill proposed substantial changes to the BEP and the methods of supplier diversity goal setting in State procurement. If passed without revisions, the bill requirements could have made the Program vulnerable to constitutional challenges. Throughout legislative session, Senate Bill 177 underwent significant review, analysis, and modification with input from CMS Legal Services. That legal insight supported the Legislature and other stakeholders, including the Governor's Office and CMS, in getting a version of Senate bill 177 passed that accomplished the general, desired legislative intent without exposing the Program to undue constitutional risk.

Join the CMS Wellness Challenge!

Living Your Best Life, the CMS Wellness Challenge has officially launched.

With this campaign, CMS will be challenging all employees to live their best life, through goal-setting, mindfulness, physical activities, emotional wholeness, spiritual and/or community motivations, and mental health projects. We challenge you to be your best self in 2020 and beyond.

To accept the challenge, go to bit.ly/CMS-Challenge2020 and indicate what your goals are for 2020. Based on what you fill out, you'll receive information on how to meet those challenges such as healthy recipes, books to read, and ways to limit screen time.

If you want to share your journey and success, email CMS.HealthChallenge@illinois.gov and you could win an exciting prize. Feel free to include a picture with your story.

This challenge is all about adding positivity in 2020 and working to accomplish our goals. So let's start living our best lives today!

Next Steps:

1. Accept the challenge at bit.ly/CMS-Challenge2020
2. Send updates on your journey to CMS.HealthChallenge@illinois.gov
3. Win fun prizes
4. Live your best life in 2020 and beyond!

CMS is committed to employee wellness

2020

#CMSChallengeAccepted
#LivingYourBestLife2020

Do you accept the challenge?

During one month

Drink eight 8-oz glasses of water 20 days • Go meatless for 20 days • Volunteer 20 hours during the month
Complete 20 jumping jacks, 20 crunches, and 20 lunges each day • Read 20 minutes each day
Spend 20 minutes every day learning a new hobby • Wake 20 minutes earlier • Bring lunch 20 times
Practice a new language 20 minutes each day • Read and share 20 professional articles in one month
Go to bed 20 minutes earlier • Walk 20 minutes every day • Limit screen time by 2 hours each night

Throughout the year

Complete 20 good deeds for others • Read 20 books • Declutter 20 items from your home and donate
Run four 5Ks • Complete 20 20K steps days • Reconnect with 20 friends, family members or colleagues
Visit 20 museums or historic sites

#CMSChallengeAccepted
#LivingYourBestLife2020

Noteworthy February Observations



Feb. 12: Lincoln's Birthday

Feb. 14: Valentine's Day

Feb. 17: Washington's Birthday (*President's Day*)

Feb. 25: Mardi Gras

Feb. 26: Ash Wednesday

American Heart Month

Black History Month



american
HEART
month

Illinois Events

Feb. 9: Maxwell Street Market

800 S Desplaines St., Chicago

<https://www.choosechicago.com/event/maxwell-street-market/2020-02-09/>

Feb. 14: Fabulously Funny Comedy Festival

Credit Union 1 Arena, 525 S Racine Ave., Chicago

<https://www.fabulouslyfunny.com/>

Feb. 15: Winter-Time Firkin Festival

Obed & Isaac's Microbrewery, 500 S 6th St., Springfield

[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wtf-winter-time-firkin-festival-2020-tickets-83352887731)

[wtf-winter-time-firkin-festival-2020-tickets-83352887731](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wtf-winter-time-firkin-festival-2020-tickets-83352887731)

Feb. 16, Feb. 23: Giant Flea Market

Illinois State Fairgrounds, 801 E Sangamon Ave., Springfield

Exposition Gardens, 1601 W Northmoor Rd., Peoria

<http://jcflea.com/>

Feb. 20: Adler After Dark

Adler Planetarium, 1300 S Lake Shore Dr., Chicago

<https://www.adlerplanetarium.org/adler-after-dark/>

Feb. 22: Empower All Abilities Conference

Southeast High School, 2350 E Ash St., Springfield

<https://www.sps186.org/parentmentor/?p=133712>



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Central Management Services

CMS

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